



THE CITY OF WINDSOR

COUNCIL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

VALERIE CRITCHLEY
CITY CLERK

IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER
TO OUR FILE NO. _____

November 7, 2013

The Honourable Julian Fantino
Veterans Affairs Canada
14th Floor
66 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0P4

Dear Honourable Sir,

At its meeting held November 4, 2013 Windsor City Council adopted the following resolution M421-2013:

That the correspondence from the Public Service Alliance of Canada dated October 30, 2013 (attached) regarding "support for efforts to help veterans who are facing the loss of front line services in the communities" **BE RECEIVED**; and further,

That Council **OPPOSE** the closure of Windsor's Veterans Affairs Office, which would affect approximately 2,629 veterans locally, as well as the closure of 8 other offices affecting 17,223 veterans, and that a letter of request **BE SENT** asking that the closures not proceed as planned.

Carried

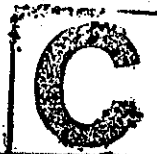
Please find this letter as Council's support with maintaining accessible and viable services to our Veterans.

Best regards,

Steve Vlachodimos
Senior Manager of Council Services/Deputy City Clerk

Attachment

cc: Sharon DeSousa, PSAC Executive Vice-President
Brian Masse, Member of Parliament, Windsor West
Joe Comartin, Member of Parliament, Windsor Tecumseh



APR 2013



Public Service Alliance of Canada
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada

Ontario

October 30, 2013

Mayor Eddie Francis
350 City Hall Square West
P.O. Box 1607
Windsor, Ontario N9A 6S1

COUNCIL AGENDA
COMMUNICATIONS
NOV 4 2013
NO. 11

By email: mayoro@city.windsor.on.ca

Dear Mayor Francis,

I am writing to ask for your support for our efforts to help veterans who are facing the loss of front line services in their communities. We would like you to consider passing a resolution that would oppose the closure of Windsor's Veterans Affairs office.

As you may know, the federal government plans to shut nine District Veterans Affairs offices in Corner Brook, Charlottetown, Sydney, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Brandon, Saskatoon, Kelowna and Prince George. The Prince George office has already closed and the others are set to shut their doors sometime between now and February 2014. We are doing everything we can to help veterans stop those closures.

We represent the client service agents, case managers and other Veterans Affairs workers who provide face to face services to veterans in these offices. They have told us they are very worried about what is going to happen to their clients if these offices shut down. That's why we've launched this campaign.

Many veterans don't even know that the Veterans Affairs offices they rely on are closing. Veterans Affairs case managers tell us that they must to break the news to their clients during home visits. PSAC's Union of Veterans Affairs Employees pressed the government on this issue in September 2013 and was told that veterans would not be informed in writing until late November (after Remembrance Day), or one month before each closure. It is rumoured that those closures could begin as early as mid-December this year.

We don't have all the numbers but we do know that as of March 2013, 17,223 clients depended on seven of the offices that are slated for closure. In Windsor, the closure would leave 2,629 current clients and many more future clients without the face-to-face services they need. The planned closure of the district offices means that veterans will be forced to travel to other cities for front line services. Or they will be forced to navigate the system by phone and computer. This is problematic for many veterans, especially those who are older and those living with PTSD and other mental health challenges.

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The government says veterans losing offices will be able to access services through Service Canada offices, but workers there have not been are not trained in veterans' programs and services and are facing cuts themselves. They can answer only very general questions, provide forms and receive completed forms. We represent these workers too, and they tell us they feel terrible because they are not able to help veterans complete forms or answer questions about which programs or benefits they may qualify for. When asked for this kind of information or assistance, staff in Service Canada offices have no choice but to point veterans to the computer or the toll-free phone line for help. That's not the front line service Canadian veterans deserve.

We have produced a video which is available on our web site – weareallaffected.ca – and you will also find more background information there. We hope you will join the efforts to stop these closures. If you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance in this matter, I encourage you to contact my political and communications officer Lino Vieira, at (416) 577-0238.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,



Sharon DeSousa, PSAC Regional Executive Vice-President, Ontario

cc: Ron Bastien, President of the Windsor Legion Branch 12
Craig Chartier, President of the Essex Legion Branch 201
Zone Commander Chris Vachon
Rob Boots, Chair, Veterans Committee, Unifor Local 444.
Michael Barnewall, veteran
Yvan Thauvette, President, Union of Veterans Affairs Employees
Jayne Auranen, UVAE National Vice-President, Ontario